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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

Women in development

Report of the Administrator

INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision 90/19 of 22 June 1990, the Governing Council requested the Administrator to report at its thirty-eighth session (1991) on procedures adopted and progress made in addressing women-in-development issues in preparation for the fifth programming cycle. It also requested the Administrator to give priority to women-in-development training, particularly at the country level. In addition, by decision 90/34 of 23 June, the Council identified women in development as one of the six areas for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to focus on in building and strengthening national capacities in the context of human development.

2. The present report is prepared in response to the above-mentioned decisions. It will address these issues and respond to requests for information by outlining the extent to which gender concerns are taken into account in all UNDP work.

I. FOLLOW-UP TO GOVERNING COUNCIL DECISIONS

3. Human development is not possible unless it encompasses women as well as men. For development to be able to benefit from women's knowledge and skills, and for women to be drawn beneficially into development, gender sensitivity is required. A commitment to addressing gender in the context of development assistance is guided by three basic concerns: (a) that the neglect of women-in-development issues adversely impacts the effectiveness of this assistance; (b) that countries need to draw upon the full potential of their human resources; and (c) that the backlog of

gender inequalities and discrimination must be addressed in the context of human development. UNDP, through its women-in-development mandate, is committed to recognize and respond to all three concerns. In this connection, the UNDP role is to assist Governments to formulate and achieve their women-in-development objectives.

4. With an emphasis on the mainstreaming of women-in-development issues, the Division for Women in Development has begun a process of scrutiny of its own current strategies as well as of the overall UNDP institutional approach to the issue of women in development. The responses to a women-in-development questionnaire, reported on at the thirty-seventh session, provided the frame of reference on which a preliminary analysis was based. Although the data from the questionnaire shows that few field offices and headquarters units addressed gender issues in the preparation of country programmes in the fourth cycle, there is indication of a growing commitment to support and develop gender-sensitive projects and programmes across all sectors. In an effort to respond to such commitment, a diversified approach has been adopted by the Division, as no single strategy can address the needs of all regions and countries. It is expected that such an approach will become even more effective during the implementation of decision 90/34, which will involve a comprehensive effort to strengthen both national capacities and UNDP staff competence to integrate gender concerns at all stages of projects and throughout the programming cycle.

5. An increasing number of requests have been received both for country-level and headquarters assistance in improving staff competence to take account of gender concerns. To respond to these demands, more effective conceptual approaches to mainstreaming gender concerns in UNDP programmes and projects are being developed. The Division has begun a series of consultations with Regional Bureaux to determine a strategy to meet the specific needs of each region. Among the approaches identified are the development of thematic and programming notes, new training modules with specific gender-sensitive approaches, feasibility studies, resource materials, and the sharing of experience and information.

6. The effectiveness and impact of the ongoing training in gender sensitivity provided to UNDP staff, agency project personnel and government counterparts have been reviewed. A revised and innovative training approach has been elaborated and initially tested in India and in Morocco in November 1990. A new case study is being developed in order to demonstrate the integration of gender issues in a more wholistic approach to projects and programmes. This is being tested in several UNDP ongoing training courses for programme staff.

7. In examining ways to integrate women-in-development issues in national development plans, preparatory work has begun on a training programme targeted primarily at field office economists and officials of planning agencies involved in preparation of the round-table process and in the formulation of macroeconomic policies. A second target group is the training of other UNDP programme staff. The training will seek to raise the level of understanding of the general problems of macroeconomics in addressing gender issues, both in the methodology and in its application of policy formulation. It is expected that this programme will help to influence decisions relating to gender concerns for public policy formulation, resource allocation and programme/projects appraisals and approvals.

8. In the area of environment, several new initiatives have been taken to ensure that women's issues are taken into account in the environmental policies and guidelines of UNDP and in the operational work on environment. These include the organization of an in-house sensitization workshop for senior UNDP staff for the purpose of identifying ways in which the issues of women and the environment are interrelated within the sustainable development equation, and to share the experience of the participants for translating the broad conceptual issues into policies and practical guides for action. UNDP is also participating in an inter-agency working group focusing on women's concerns in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992.

9. Considerable attention continues to be given to project formulation and appraisal. Priority is being given to putting in place and maintaining a computerized consultants roster and a resource and reference system on women-in-development issues.

II. POLICY ISSUES

10. Responsibility for ensuring that all UNDP work is gender-sensitive should rest, henceforth, with the heads of operational and policy units, and through them with field offices. While the Division for Women in Development provides a service function to these units, accountability will increasingly move to the concerned operational and policy units at headquarters and in the field offices. Resident Representatives in particular will be responsible for ensuring that women-in-development issues are brought fully to the attention of Governments, as well as ensuring that all UNDP personnel in field offices are fully familiar with women-in-development issues and take them into account in their work. They will also ensure that all field staff receive the training necessary to enable them to address women-in-development concerns in all aspects of their programme work. It is clear, however, that sustained support and assistance from headquarters in the form of reference material, programme guidelines, training, advisory and consultancy services, will continue to be required.

11. National and field office capacity in gender responsiveness could be strengthened through the appointment of subregional women-in-development advisors. These advisors would be responsible not for women-specific activities, but for the integration of gender concerns in all development efforts. They could be made available to field offices and Governments to assist in the preparation of national development plans, in country and sectoral programmes, in training, in project formulation review and evaluation and in the provision of advice on gender-related conceptual, methodological and operational issues. As the effectiveness of this approach is established, further advisers could be placed in the regions, subject to the availability of funds. Where the use of subregional advisors is not considered suitable, this expertise could be provided through local, regional or international consultants.

12. There is a need to ensure that gender concerns are integrated as a part of all the other focus areas identified by Governing Council decision 90/34. In its decision 91/3 of 22 February 1991, regarding Special Programme Resources (SPR) in

the fifth programming cycle, the Council has proposed an earmarking of $8 million from the SPR for women in development. A programming document will be submitted to the Council in line with paragraph 8 of decision 91/3. This will propose that the allocation be used, inter alia, for policy development and the incorporation of women-in-development concerns throughout UNDP policies, procedures and programmes.